post as all articles transmitted through post except the postcards are transmitted in closed condition. To protect the privacy of communications in transmission any act of opening or delaying or detaining of postal article has been made a punishable offence under the Indian Post Office Act, 1898.

(b) & (c) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

OFC between Nalanda and Bihar Sharif Exchanges

2022. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH 'SURYA': Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 3707 given in Rajya Sabha on the 21st July, 1998 and state:

(a) whether the STD Code 061194 allotted long-long ago to Nalanda exchanges has since been made operational;

(b) if not, the details of the present status/progress made in this regard;

(c) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to continue to keep Nalanda parented to Bihar Sharif exchange;

(d) if so, the reasons/circumstances which led Government to change their stance; and

(e) if the reply to part (c) above be in the affirmative whether Government would provide sufficient optical fibre connectivity between Nalanda and Bihar Sharif so that Nalanda exchange could be easily and readily accessible from outside?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (e) Each Short Distance Charging Area (SDCA) is allotted a unique STD code; accordingly Nalanda exchange which was earlier in Rajgir SDCA, was allotted Rajgir SDCA's code viz 6119. The code however was not implemented as no media between Nalanda and Rajgir was available. So the exchange was parented to Biharsharif. Subsequently due to technical reasons Rajgir SDCA has been merged into Biharsharif SDCA. Nalanda exchange thus now has become part of Biharsharif SDCA. As a consequence the exchange will continue to remain parented to Biharsharif with code 6112. An optical fibre

connectivity has already been provided between Nalanda and Biharsharif for easy access to Nalanda from outside.

Foreign Equity in Telecom Companies

2023. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a cap of 49 per cent foreign equity on the Telecom Companies operating in the country;

(b) if so, whether it is also a fact that the M/s Max Hutchinson the licencee for providing cellular Mobile telephone service in Mumbai has a foreign equity component of 70 per cent; and

(c) if so, the manner in which the cap has been bypassed and the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) No Sir, M/s. Hutchison on Max Telecom Ltd. the licensee for providing Cellular Mobile Telephone Service in Mumbai has foreign equity of 49%.

Post Offices in Tripura

2024. SHRI KHAGAN DAS: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether most of the post offices in Tripura are housed in rented buildings though the postal department has plenty of land in several parts of the State;

(b) whether the lands acquired by the Department have been lying for long without any boundary walls to prevent encroachment; and

(c) if so, whether there is any proposal to construct buildings on these lands?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir. 62 (sixty two) post offices are housed in rented buildings out of a total